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DEVELOPMENTS IN EUBOEIA AND OROPOS AT THE END OF THE “DARK AGES” (CA. 700 TO THE MID SEVENTH CENTURY BC)*

This paper examines the period from the end of the so-called “Dark Ages”, ca. 700 BC, to the beginning of the Archaic period, the first half of the 7th century BC, on the island of Euboea and related sites, such as Oropos, prompted by William Coulson’s words in *The Greek Dark Ages* (Coulson 1990, 9), where he wrote, “The choice of the term Dark Ages was motivated by the general perception of the time as a low point in the quality of art and life... Much of this is undoubtedly true, but the wealth of newly discovered material... shows that the picture of dire poverty has been somewhat exaggerated”. These words suggest that received notions should be re-examined. In the case of the “Dark Ages,” recent research has shown that this period was in fact characterized by a very complex culture with important regional variations. With this paper, I hope to establish a point of departure for future discussion on Euboean Gulf societies and material culture during the first half of the 7th century BC. In Euboea, the period ca. 700-650 BC occupies a position between older traditions and new developments: it is a time of great historical significance, which in many respects remains “dark”, primarily because many questions that could help us understand it better, have not been answered. For instance, the characteristics of this

half century on Euboea need to be further clarified. Moreover, the complexities of Euboean pottery production during this period have not been systematically discussed¹. Another major issue is how this interval is actually related to the so-called Lelantine War: it is with this matter that I would like to begin.

Many changes and events that occurred in Euboea in the late 8th and the first half of the 7th century BC have been connected with the Lelantine War². This war, mentioned by Herodotus, Thucydides and other ancient authors, and dated by many scholars at some point between the end of the 8th and the first half of the 7th century BC (although other dates between the late 8th and the early 6th century BC have also been proposed), is often considered to have had a great impact, since it was preserved in later tradition. Although the historicity of the Lelantine War cannot be easily questioned, due to the ancient testimonia, many points, such as the extent of the conflict, the possible participants besides Chalkis and Eretria, and the date of the war remain unresolved³. Furthermore, the authority of many ancient sources for this war

1. Except for some categories of pottery, for instance the Eretrian grave amphorae which Boardman (Boardman 1952, 13-20) classified as Groups A and B of a Sub-geometric series.

2. For the connection of literary sources and archaeological evidence with the Lelantine War, see Themelis 1983, 157-158; Parker 1997, 59-93; Walker 2004, 157-171.

3. For ancient sources and chronological issues, see D’Agostino 1967, 30, n. 1; Donlan 1970, 131-142; Tausend 1987, 499-500, 501, 504-505; Parker 1997, 11-24, 59-93; Crielaard 2002, 239-295; Hall 2006, 1-8, 19-22. For the

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(for instance Herodotus, Aristotle, Plutarch) has recently been subjected to thought-provoking analysis by Jonathan Hall (Hall 2006, 1-8). For these reasons, I would like to comment further on the new archaeological data that can be associated with this period. I would argue here that the archaeological record of this interval appears to be far more complex than previously thought, while interpreting it only in the context of a war and its aftermath can be inadequate to explain the changes that occurred. Comparison with the changes that took place in regions adjacent to Euboea makes such shortcomings of interpretation especially evident. I would suggest that what occurred on Euboea is better considered in a wider social and cultural framework, especially when compared with developments in regions, like Attica, which, as we know, were not involved in the colonization movement and did not take part in the Lelantine War⁴.

Until now, the splendour of EIA Chalkis on Euboea (figs. 1, 2) has not been well represented by the material remains, largely because the modern city covers much of the ancient one. The existing Geometric and Archaic finds from Chalkis come mainly from the area of Vathrovouni and westwards toward Gyftika, Agios Ioannis and Kamares (Bakhuizen 1985, 75-96; Kalligas 1988-1989, 99)⁵.

The archaeological evidence from Eretria and Oropos (OSK plot) attests to the existence of two flourishing neighbouring settlements on opposite sides of the Euboean Gulf during the second half of the 8th century BC that shared a

cultural background with many common features⁶. At Eretria (figs. 1, 3a-b), ca. 700 and in the early 7th century BC, a number of houses was abandoned⁷, while other buildings and structures, certain of them cultic, were probably still in use (the North Sacrificial Area) or are thought to have been constructed at around the same time, some of them replacing Geometric predecessors⁸. The first half of the 7th century has up to now offered far fewer architectural remains and finds compared with the second half of the 8th century. However, it is not easy to connect the new state of affairs –the presumed impact of the Lelantine War– with the sparse architectural remains of the first half of the 7th century, since it can be observed that the quantity of architectural remains does not increase much in the second half of the century⁹. Nonetheless, even if our knowledge of Eretrian ceramic production of the first half of the 7th century BC gradually improves thanks to the results of recent excavations, the quantity of such pottery discovered would still be significantly less compared with Eretrian Late Geometric (LG) vessels found at the site; as well, the small-

conflict's extent and participants, see e.g. Tausend 1987, 501-514; Hall 2006, 1-8.

4. The evidence from Boeotia for this period, mainly coming from cemeteries (except for the recently-excavated sanctuary of Herakles at Thebes, whose material is under study by the excavators), is less extensive than that from Attica, at least for the time being.

5. The study and final publication of the 7th-century material found in deposits at Chalkis (OT 389: AΔ 26, 1971, *Χρονικά*, 252; AΔ 27, 1972, *Χρονικά*, 340), which has recently been entrusted to me, will increase our knowledge on ancient Chalkis and its production.

6. Eretria: e.g. Themelis 1983, 157. Oropos: Mazarakis Ainian summarizes his recent work on EIA Oropos: Mazarakis Ainian 2007, 34-36.

7. Mazarakis Ainian 1987, 4-10.

8. Architectural evidence dated to the first half of the 7th century, together with the finds connected with them: the Early Archaic temple of Apollo (F/800-900), which replaced the LG cultic building; the North Sacrificial Area near the temple of Apollo, probably still in use (F/800); an apsidal building, thought to be a sanctuary, which perhaps replaced a Geometric-period structure at the beginning of the century near the West Gate area (B/700); the "Heroon" and the related rectangular buildings in its vicinity (AB/500-600); and two buildings interpreted as houses (F/500). For the relevant literature, see Charalambidou 2006, 993-1018.

9. Again, the remains from buildings and structures used in the second half of the 7th century, together with their associated finds, were found primarily in the North Sacrificial Area (F/800), in the area of the Heroon (AB/500-600), and on the Acropolis. Detailed bibliography in Charalambidou 2006; for the latest finds from the Acropolis of Eretria, see Huber 2007, 120-129; 2008, 148-153.

er number of ceramic finds from this period at Eretria should be discussed in connection with 7th-century material from other areas of Greece, such as Attica (see below)¹⁰. As far as the decrease in evidence from the inhabited area during the 7th century is concerned, several factors may also be considered, such as the temporary reduction in exploited land at Eretria because of flood control measures, beginning probably around 700 BC, as well as the fact that the evidence has been disturbed in some cases by deposits of alluvial fill and continuous habitation of the urban area in later centuries (Charalambidou 2006). Another kind of evidence from Eretria formerly related to the Lelantine War should also be re-examined. For example, Hall points out that the burials in the northern area of the city known as the necropolis of the Heroon may be those of warriors, who died fighting for their city in the Lelantine War, but could just as easily be connected with other completely unknown episodes of Eretrian history (Hall 2006, 7).

In Oropos, after many buildings of the Geometric settlement at the OSK plot were abandoned ca. 700 BC (figs. 1, 4a), there are signs that the space in the same plot was still in use during the 7th century. For instance, in addition to an area with some stone structures in the Central Quarter (fig. 4b), which might be connected with ritual activities, the area with a peribolos of monumental dimensions in the West Quarter and some walls beside it offers evidence for the first half of the 7th century BC (fig. 4c)¹¹. Now that excavations in this Quarter have progressed further, it becomes clearer that the area of the West Quarter peribolos seems to have been used in the 7th century and part of the 6th century BC. With its southern tower-like

structure and north room with a pebble floor, this peribolos may resemble a military camp, but otherwise may simply be an agricultural or multi-use installation¹². The architectural remains described above have yielded pottery of the years ca. 700 BC and the first half of the 7th century, which finds close parallels among Eretrian vessels, like the pottery from the LG settlement at the OSK plot, and may be considered to be related to the Eretrian tradition; this material therefore indicates that the affinities between Eretria and Oropos continued in the Archaic period¹³.

What occurred during this period elsewhere in Attica, a region that, unlike Euboea, did not engage in overseas colonial activity during the 8th century BC and was not involved in the Lelantine War? Ian Morris has pointed out that during the 8th century there is evidence for a population increase, which was not, however, as rapid as implied by the number of attested graves; likewise, it cannot be maintained that the population diminished to the degree indicated by the small number of known graves after ca. 700 BC (Morris 1987, 158). Seventh-century burials in Attica do not necessarily reflect demographic reality in terms of population fluctuations and site occupation (see also Whitley 2001, 236; Mersch 1997, 58). Though 7th-century evidence seems sparse in a number of other areas of Greece, Morris argued that the theory of a general drought which struck a large part of Greece cannot be considered a satisfactory solution (Morris 1987, 160-167; for the drought: Camp 1979, 397-411; 1981, 55-61)¹⁴. While the

10. The places where pottery of the first half of the 7th century has been found at Eretria are also described below.

11. For the stone structures in the Central Quarter and the monumental peribolos in the West Quarter see most recently Mazarakis Ainian 2002, 161-164, 174-178; 2006-07, 91-92, 101-103; Charalambidou 2007, 276.

12. Possible military camp: e.g. Mazarakis Ainian 2002, 177-178. The architectural form shows, however, some affinities with Greek agricultural installations in the Greek world, mainly of later date, in Attica, the Cyclades, and elsewhere: Young 1956, 122-146.

13. The pottery from the OSK plot dated to the 7th and also the 6th century BC underlines the close relations between Eretria and Oropos, which Knoepfler has already affirmed based on the literary evidence (Knoepfler 1985, 50-55; 2000, 81-98).

14. Besides Attica and Euboea, a decline in the quantity of seventh-century ceramic material can also be ob-

relative scarcity of evidence is certainly an issue, other elements should also be considered, such as the difficulty of identifying 7th-century material, which seems to hold true for several areas of Greece; Corinth, a production centre with well-published and abundant evidence is an exception. One of the main reasons that discontinuity is often reported in the 7th-century material, it has been suggested, is because that material is still difficult to recognize. This suggestion is relevant to Euboean pottery, as developments, especially in Subgeometric vases (to be discussed below), occur at a slow rate, and many changes have not been properly traced yet. Furthermore, the picture may sometimes have been distorted by the lack of published 7th-century material from some sites on Euboea¹⁵. At least some of these factors may have affected our picture of Euboean 7th-century material culture, as well as reinforced the impression of discontinuity at some Euboean settlements (for instance Osborne 1989, 313).

Many changes occurred in Attica ca. 700 BC and the first half of the 7th century. Initially, archaeological data indicate changes in burial customs, specifically the decrease in grave goods – metal offerings become rarer, particularly ca. 700-500 BC –, the decline in the number of graves, the distinction between adult and child cemeteries, and the preference for cremation in the case of adults. Among Morris' most significant findings is that between 700 BC and the late sixth century BC, a relatively small portion of the adult population was being buried in such a way as to be represented in the archaeological record; he proposes that other kinds of less formal disposal for the unprivileged might also have been practiced (Morris 1987, 97-109; 1995, 45-74).

Regarding the situation at Eretria, Crielaard argues that it is probable that after ca. 700 BC the West Cemetery was no longer used for

adult burials, but mainly for inhumations of infants and small children¹⁶. If this change in the use of the burial space can be regarded as strong evidence, then it may indicate that separation of adult and child cemeteries might have occurred at Eretria around the same time as in Attica. But where were the adults of the first half of the 7th century buried, since there is no relevant evidence from the West Cemetery and the burials in the north region of the city (the necropolis of the Heroon) stop ca. 700/690 BC¹⁷? The lack of evidence for adult burials during this period raises many questions. Is it coincidental? Could it be that we should look for more informal types of burial, as has been proposed for Attica? The number of child burials is also limited. Other factors should be taken into account as well. In plot 6 at Eretria (Spanou plot), in addition to the Orientalizing grave amphora ME 16619, fragments of 7th-century amphorae, probably also grave amphorae, were unearthed¹⁸. In all likelihood, these fragments are Subgeometric, from the first half of the 7th, and Orientalizing of the second half of the 7th to the early 6th century BC, and in reality indicate that the known 7th-century children burials are yet to be accurately evaluated. One possible explanation for the fragmentary condition of these 7th-century amphorae is that they were deliberately removed in order to make space available for later burials, which have also been found at the site. If this fragmentation occurs in the case of easily recognizable material, what could we expect to find in less obvious (informal) burials,

16. Crielaard 2007, 178. Twenty coarse pithoi, with incised decoration of ca. 700 BC, and thirteen Sub-Geometric burial amphorae, mainly of the first half of the 7th century BC, were published, see Boardman 1952, 13-20.

17. The latest interment from the Heroon necropolis, Tomb 16, which has been dated to ca. 680 BC, was a pit burial ("inhumation en fosse") belonging to a small child and containing only an aryballos: Blandin 2007, 35-58 (child burial, 55).

18. The amphora ME 16619: Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1995, 78, fig. 59. The excavation of this amphora and the 7th century unpublished fragments is reported in ΑΔ 23, 1968, *Χρονικά*, 230-231; ΑΔ 27, 1972, *Χρονικά*, 355-357.

served, e.g., in the Argolid (Morgan – Whitelaw 1991, 94-95) and Achaia (Morgan – Hall 1996, 176, 182).

15. This problem is also noted by Lang 1996, 295.

supposing that at least some adults may have been buried in this way?

At Eretria, a decrease in high-value offerings, often imported, is observed in the North Sacrificial Area from the beginning of the 7th century BC¹⁹. During the 7th century, changes in material behaviour occurred in many regions of Greece for various reasons. During the same period, in Attica, Osborne explained the observed reductions in the number of dedications at cult places during the 7th century compared with that of the 8th by the fact that in addition to the established major centres of worship, new cult places had been founded, with the latter receiving a portion of the offerings that had up to then been concentrated exclusively at the old cult centres (Osborne 1989, 308-309). Whitley claimed that impressive remains and votive deposits are absent from 7th-century Attic cult places, except for Sounion, but this does not necessarily prove that the inhabitants of Attica were poorer (Whitley 1994, 51-70; 2001, 240-243); rather, the 7th-century iconography of Protoattic vessels may indicate that the contemporary conception of the symbolism of the material world was different from that current in the 8th century. In 7th-century Argos, a decline in the local production of fine decorated pottery has been observed to constitute an exception not paralleled in other crafts such as metalworking. According to Morgan and Whitelaw (Morgan – Whitelaw 1991, 94-95), the context of elite displays of material wealth changed, indicated by the fact that a considerable percentage of the already limited number of elaborate Subgeometric and Protoargive vessels so far discovered mainly comes from sanctuaries, not from graves, as in the Geometric period. At Eretria, the change in the character of offerings in

cultic deposits, if we accept that most luxury offerings at cult places antedate the early 7th century, may be compared with changes in Attica but may also be related to the city's apparent loss of many of its old markets sometime after the early 7th century BC (see below).

Frequent ritual vessels/dedications at the Eretrian sanctuaries of the Archaic period are now local clay hydriae and long-necked jugs. Although fewer offerings from other categories dated to the 7th and 6th centuries BC have been reported, imports are occasionally found, as the late 7th-mid 6th-century BC stone lion figurine of "Cypriot-Ionian" origin with a later dedicatory inscription to Athena recently discovered at the goddess' sanctuary on Eretria's Acropolis makes evident (Huber 2007, 120-129). While ritual vessels and offerings at the cult places of Eretria during the 7th and 6th centuries BC were more often locally-produced clay vessels, a corresponding reduction of high-value dedications could have occurred. A limited number of sherds can be ascribed to the first half-third quarter of the 7th century. They come from the North Sacrificial Area and include figural scenes (**fig. 5a**). Some of these sherds, which come from small hydriae, depict women with raised hands, holding a branch (in this case perhaps worshippers). This new motif of women with raised hands, occurring also in other variations, becomes common in the second half of the 7th and the early 6th century BC, especially on long-necked jugs found at cult places and on grave amphorae (Jugs: Huber 2003, pls. 24-28, 76, 83-99; Amphorae: Boardman 1952, pl. 6; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1995, fig. 59).

A significant number of scholars believe that Chalkis won the Lelantine War, while Eretria lost (see, e.g., Bradeen 1947, 223-241; Geyer 1962, 61; Themelis 1981-1982, 241; Tausend 1987, 508; Ducrey *et al.* 2004, 27). Besides the evidence from Chalkis and Eretria, the published material from Eretria's and Chalkis' colonies and from other regions with which the two cities had relationships gives few new clear indications one way or the other, though in many

19. At the North Sacrificial Area, besides pottery, luxury offerings (beads, scarabs and scaraboids, amulets, fibulae and other objects) are reported to date mainly from the LG period and they show relationships with islands of the Aegean, regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Italian peninsula (Huber 2003, especially 22, 27, 31-33, 123-125, 169-174).

places in South Italy and Sicily recognized as Chalcidian colonies (Rhegion, Zancle, Metauros, Mylai, Naxos, Himera), the material, mainly 7th-century colonial vases in the Euboean tradition, such as small cylindrical bottles, oinochoai with cut-away necks, kraters, skyphoi, and so on, indicating some degree of contact with Euboea and mainly with Chalkis, is more plentiful²⁰. This material in South Italy and Sicily during this period, however, cannot be considered exceptional among colonial wares influenced by other regions, such as Corinth. In Chalcidike, especially in Mende –the only Eretrian colony in the peninsula, whose site has been securely identified– as far as we know from the published finds, the role of Euboean/Euboeanizing vessels mainly after the beginning of the 7th century BC, relative to the quantity of imports and influences on local production from other regions (for instance Ionia, Aegolis, and Corinth), is small compared even with the 8th-century finds and may indicate that the nature of contacts between Eretria and its colony changed from this period onwards²¹. The same picture –very few Euboean/Euboeanizing finds, strong Ionian presence– occurs at other sites in the Chalcidike during the 7th century BC, for instance Sani (Vokotopoulou 1993, 179-236), where the material evidence indicates some kind of contact with the Euboeans, more marked in the 8th century BC, but also at a few sites in central Macedonia (Nea Anchialos, Karabournaki), where the number of imported East Greek vessels and the influence of East Greek workshops on local ceramic production is large, especially from the second half of the

7th century BC (Paspalas 1995; Papadopoulos 1996, 162-163; 2005, 580-588).

Since the date of the Lelantine War is not yet accurately fixed, we do not know, however, if the war actually caused the circumstances that weakened Euboean commerce, or if the presumed decrease in Euboean commercial activity in these regions, based on the material evidence, was mainly caused by the rise of other commercial powers such as Ionia and Corinth regardless of the war's impact. From the early 7th century onwards, Euboean contacts with other parts of the Mediterranean seem to decrease as well, judging from the material evidence from Cyprus and Al Mina²², but again we still cannot be sure if this was a consequence of the war.

The archaeological evidence consequently indicates that significant changes occurred in the Euboean Gulf region during the period of ca. 700 BC - early 7th century BC. As the evidence shows, the Lelantine War's impact may not explain the whole picture. Some aspects of the evidence of the first half of the 7th century at Eretria –the best documented site on Euboea– such as the relatively small number of finds (both movable and immovable), the apparent reduction in high-value offerings at cult places, and the fall in the number of known graves, could indicate a wider range of social changes, especially when compared with similar events in contemporary Attica. The conservative, autochthonous Attic society of the 7th century described by Whitley (Whitley 1994, 65), where far fewer locally-produced vases were exported or copied in comparison to the 8th century, is also a society which, as current evidence shows, had restricted its contacts with the outside world. Stable patterns of hierarchy and status are easier to maintain in an area where merchants and their wares no longer have the pow-

20. On these vases from colonies in South Italy and Sicily, see Pelagatti 1981, 308-311, figs. 11-14; 1982, 150, pl. XXXIII-XXXIV, 153, fig. 16; Lentini 1990, 67-82; 1998, 379, fig. 2-3, 382; Bacci 1998, 388, fig. 2m; Bacci-Tigano 1999, 92-94; Tigano 2002, 51; Stampolidis 2003, 321, nos. 352-353, 326, 369; Mercuri 2004, 134-138.

21. Cf. Moschonnissioti 1998, 269. Of the 7th century Euboean/Euboeanizing vessels from Mende, the following vases have been published: an amphora (Vokotopoulou 1989, 412-413, drawing no. 2; 1996, 323, fig. 2) and a stamnoid krater (Vokotopoulou 1988, 331, pl. 1.1).

22. For Cyprus, see Coldstream 1995, 199-214; very few Euboean vases identified as Subgeometric have been reported. Descœudres (Descœudres 1978, 15, 18) claimed that the Euboeans stayed at Al Mina until the third quarter of the 7th century BC and dates their departure to ca. 630 BC. This view needs to be confirmed by more evidence.

er to influence social change. The same could be true for Euboea, which like Attica seems to have been deprived of many of its contacts with the outside world from the early 7th century BC on, while many of its more energetic members could have moved to the colonies.

In addition, more evidence is available that can improve our picture of 7th-century Euboea and modify the perception of settlement discontinuity on the island. Even if evidence for 7th-century Euboean Gulf settlements is more limited than that for the 8th or the 6th centuries BC, discontinuity is not self-evident for the settlements of Eretria and Oropos; recent archaeological research in fact shows that habitation continued at these sites during the 7th century BC. Moreover, as Hall has remarked, theorizing that the area of Lefkandi was abandoned ca. 700 BC is quite risky, since only a small percentage of the settlement has been excavated. The 6th-century pottery recorded at the site is not necessarily connected with the re-establishment of Lefkandi, as usually thought, but may instead indicate that Lefkandi was inhabited continuously from the Geometric to the Archaic period (Hall 2006, 7)²³. Furthermore, the abandonment of Geometric buildings at Lefkandi, Eretria, and Oropos at ca. 700 BC, is not necessarily only a consequence of the Lelantine War, for some settlement sites in Attica were reportedly abandoned at around the same time (Osborne 1989, 313).

Let us turn briefly to the question of ceramic production, to which the second part of this paper is devoted, mainly because pottery represents a significant portion of the material culture of the first half of the 7th century BC on Euboea and in Oropos. It can now be said that simple figural compositions – scenes which usually have antecedents in the Geometric repertoire – as well as scenes which involve Orientalizing motifs are not lacking in the Euboean tradition of ca. 700-ca. 650 BC, although they

are rarer than in Protoattic pottery, as shown by Eretrian vases (e.g. **figs. 5a-b**)²⁴ and vases of similar style from Oropos (e.g. **fig. 6**)²⁵. Furthermore, although mythological scenes on decorated fine wheel-made Euboean pottery of the 7th century are indeed absent until now, one scene with Centaurs from a relief pithos, dated slightly later than the mid-7th century BC, found recently at Zarakes on Euboea (if it belongs to Euboean workshop production), may indicate continuity in the depiction of local myths that was not interrupted during the 7th century (**fig. 7**: Chatzidimitriou 2003-2004, 181-196, pl. 37-38a).

Some deposits from Chalkis have produced 7th century material that is soon to be studied, as mentioned earlier²⁶. The main areas at Eretria, where pottery of the first half of the 7th century BC has been identified up to now, are listed below. The Eretrian finds, both published and unpublished (most of them under study) fall mainly into the following groups: a) a variety of vessels (amphorae, kraters, calyx vases, skyphoi, kotylai, cups, and so on) from the area of the West Gate (e.g. **fig. 8**: Descœudres 1976, 13-58)²⁷; b) a variety of material from the Heroon and the wells and the deposits in its vicinity; c) a few vases, mainly hydriae (**fig. 5a**),

24. Eretrian vases: Huber 2003, vol. I, 53, 63, H153-H157, vol. II, 19, pl. 20, 76; Descœudres 1976, 29, FK 475/488, *Beil.* 13 respectively. The term Orientalizing is used provisionally in my paper until a better word for motifs not necessarily associated with Oriental influence can be proposed.

25. For reasons of brevity, this paper will present only a few of the distinctive ceramic finds from Oropos relevant to the present discussion. All drawings were made and digitally processed by the author, whose final publication of the pottery from the excavations at the OSK plot conducted by Professor A. Mazarakis Ainian will include a systematic study of the vases from Oropos dating from the 7th to the early 5th centuries comprising a typology of shapes, an examination of decorative motifs and a quantitative estimate of the ceramic material, as well as a detailed analysis of the pottery from Oropos during the first half of the 7th century.

26. See above note 5.

27. For shapes of the first half of the 7th century BC, see also *Beil.* 2-11.

23. Sixth-century pottery at Lefkandi: Boardman – Price 1980, 78, pl. 59, nos. 343-350, pl. 63, nos. 344, 350.

from the North Sacrificial Area (Huber 2003, 19, H151-H157, pl. 76); d) a very small number of sherds from the upper layers of the Geometric sanctuary of Apollo (the material from the Early Archaic temple of Apollo excavated by Kourouniotis has not yet been identified); e) the grave amphorae, known as Subgeometric series A and B (e.g. **fig. 10a-d**: Kourouniotis 1903, 1-38; Boardman 1952, 16-20, pl. 4)²⁸ and the amphora fragments from the Spanou plot²⁹; and f) the work of the Eretrian “Crab Painter,” whose career started in Late Geometric IIB and probably continued into the early years of the 7th century BC, using more animated motifs (**fig. 11**: Descœudres 1972, 269-282)³⁰.

With this material should be considered the pottery from Skala Oropos (OSK plot) which was excavated mainly in the architectural contexts discussed above, and from the destruction layers of fill in the same area. These finds share common features with Euboean pottery, specifically Eretrian manufactures, and many may be regarded as related to the Eretrian tradition.

Ceramic production of ca. 700 BC on Euboea and at Oropos can be considered transitional. Changes in pottery production comparable to those that occurred in the Euboean Gulf region also took place in Attica³¹. On Euboea and at Oropos, the Late Geometric IIB style ends by giving way to a Subgeometric style enriched with a simple Orientalizing repertoire which begins around 700 BC and further developments in the following years. The first half of the

7th century saw the development of the Orientalizing stylistic trend – represented by a fairly limited number of vases – alongside the linear Subgeometric style, which occurs more abundantly. Regarding the vases with Orientalizing motifs, the almost total absence of documented vessels in this category has in the past produced an incomplete picture of Euboean Gulf pottery production. The vases with Orientalizing motifs, for instance plant motifs, from Eretria and Oropos show affinities with products of Protoattic, Protocorinthian and Boeotian workshops (for instance **figs. 10a, 12a-b** from Eretria and Oropos); the same holds true for many linear Subgeometric vessels³².

An exceptional vessel with figural composition on the handle zone and Orientalizing motifs in the adjoining zones, which seems to display both older and newer motifs, is the krater from Oropos dated to ca. 700-690 BC (**fig. 13**). The depiction of chariots is reminiscent of Geometric models, while the two zones beneath it – distinguished by heart-shaped palmettes and large-scale hooks – display new-style motifs. This krater may be either a product of an Attic workshop that utilized the Euboean-style motif of birds with angular wings, or of a workshop at Oropos with strong Atticizing features³³.

32. Some vases of the Euboean tradition, I have recently noticed, show similarities with certain Boeotian vases of the same period from the sanctuary of Herakles at Thebes (see above note 4).

33. Mazarakis Ainian 1996, 112, pl. 38a; 1997, 66, pl. 27a; Charalambidou 2007, 279-280, fig. 6.2. The chariot type finds closer parallels among the type B examples in the typology established by Rombos (Rombos 1988, 94-95, pl. 15c); it appears on LGII vases and is not common on Early Protoattic vases, where more evolved chariot types are usually preferred. Two birds with angular wings in the Euboean style, an iconographic type not found until now on Attic vessels, frame the principal scene. This scene may depict a chariot race or a battle; the first interpretation now seems more likely, mainly because of the vessel's dating to ca. 700-690 BC (Rombos 1988, 125-126). A parallel for the opposed chariots on the krater from Oropos is found in Cretan jewellery of the Geometric period, on a gold band from the necropolis of Eleutherna, probably dating from the late 8th century BC, reported to combine

28. I wish to thank Mrs. E. Stasinopoulou, curator of the Vase Collection at the National Archaeological Museum, for permission to publish photographs of the Group B amphorae (Athens, NM, 12131, 12131a, 1005, 12078).

29. See note 18.

30. To this brief list should also be added the material from the apsidal building in B/700 and the two buildings in F/500, since it reportedly dates from these years.

31. The variety of different styles in Attic ceramic production of the end of the 8th-beginning of the 7th century BC, is demonstrated, e.g., in Cook 1947, 139-155; Brakaw 1963, 63-73; Morris 1987, 14-17; Whitley 1994, 53; 2001, 240-241.

The affinities of some vessels from Eretria and Oropos with Attic vessels, for instance those of the Phaleron group, in which linear decoration predominates but some vases with simple curvilinear decorative motifs also appear, are worthy of note (for the Phaleron group –vases from the Phaleron cemetery–, see Kourouniotis 1911, 246-251; Pelekides 1916, 13-64; Cook 1934-1935, 166, no. 1; Young 1942, 23-57). The zone of hooks, which in all likelihood derive mainly from those on Attic vases, can appear in combination with known Euboean-style decorative motifs such as M-shaped angles and inverted triangles, as in this example from Oropos (**fig. 14**). Some of these vases may date from as early as the first quarter of the 7th century and show that the new style had in all probability already appeared by this time³⁴.

In addition to Attic and Corinthian influences, indigenous motifs of the Euboean-Boeotian region and the Cyclades, such as the scene depicting a horse at the manger, already common in the Late Geometric style, but still current in the first half of the 7th century, also appear on vases both at Eretria and Oropos. The widely known horse-at-the-manger motif originates in the LG I style of the Cesnola Painter (Kourou 1998, 168, n.12) and is still found in the first half of the 7th century as attested by hydriae and jugs from Eretria and Oropos (**fig. 5a: H150 and fig. 6**). As well, it occurs on two 7th-century Boeotian kraters, possibly works of a single painter, which have been dated to 675-650 BC: (a) Krater NM 228, (b) Krater from Agia Eleousa (Pyri) 16960³⁵. On the long-necked jug from Oropos, the horse is probably winged. The depiction of the scene on the jug

from Oropos shows similarities with the Eretrian hydria H150, while the shape of the jug –in this instance, the majority of its profile is preserved– could be considered to foreshadow the long-necked Eretrian Orientalizing jugs (Huber 2003, pls. 21-28, 81-99). The jugs from the first half of the 7th century at Oropos are significant because they fill a gap in the scholarship, since long-necked Eretrian Late Geometric, as well as Orientalizing jugs were already known (Huber 2003, vol. I, 58-63, vol. II, 25-31, pl. 21-28, 81-99; Blandin 2007, vol. II, 100, T8.II [ME 2579], pl. 171. 3) but variants of the shape from ca. 700-ca. 650 BC have not been found until now.

During the first half of the 7th century, vases with simple linear Subgeometric decoration from Euboea and Oropos are numerous. It is important to distinguish them from LG vases with linear decoration by identifying and understanding what Coldstream called the "intrinsic" changes that occurred from one period to the next (Coldstream 1968, 329). In many cases, the most crucial factor in distinguishing between the vases of the two periods seems to be differences in shape rather than surface decoration, as the use of thin, carelessly painted lines, frequently found on Subgeometric vases, had already begun towards the end of the LG II style.

For example, one of the most common shapes of drinking vessels, the deep skyphos (a counterpart to the shallow type) can best be dated according to the development of its shape: from the beginning of the 7th century deep skyphoi often seem to acquire a more bulbous curve in the handle zone and a steeper lower body than their LGIIb predecessors, for instance these specimens from Eretria (**fig. 8a-b**). At Oropos, skyphoi of the Thapsos class –a number of them probably local–, are known; unfortunately, most survive in a very fragmentary state, usually down to the middle part of the body. Most of them are probably LG IIb (mainly ca. 720-700/690 BC). Imitations of skyphoi of the Thapsos class dated to the first half of the 7th century have been reported from other workshops, however, including Greek colonial work-

elements of hunting and battle scenes (Stampolidis 2004, 290-291, no. 385).

34. Boardman (Boardman 1957, 16, pl. 6d), commenting on a clay stand in the British Museum (BM 1929.7-15.1) that is likely a Euboean product, also noticed similarities with the Phaleron group.

35. Athens, National Museum 228: Ruckert 1976, 94, Kr 14, fig. 11, pl. 19. Agia Eleousa 16960: Andreiomenou 1981, 251-252, figs. 2-3; 1995, 150-153, n. 21-22, pls. 11-12.

shops in South Italy and Sicily³⁶. The two skyphoi from Eretria mentioned above could be considered a later local variation of the Thapsos class with panel, since these published Eretrian vases have been dated to the first half of the 7th century BC or slightly later (Descœudres 1976, 22, FK 195. 5-6, pl. 5); on at least one of them, the main metope is a very narrow zone decorated with sigmas, while the parallel horizontal lines are correspondingly longer (fig. 8b).

Subgeometric kotylai from Oropos, which can be regarded as related to the Euboean tradition, generally follow Corinthian models, as do the Attic kotylai, and their walls now become straighter and higher, along with their Corinthian and Attic counterparts (Neeft 1975, 110). Around 700 BC, the solidly painted lower half of these Corinthianizing kotylai is replaced by rays. During the period when the bars on the handles of Corinthian kotylai were usually replaced by a horizontal line, a change that in Corinthian workshops had already occurred in the Early Protocorinthian phase (Neeft 1975, fig. III, 2b, 7, 8d), a number of kotylai from Oropos, like some Attic ones, especially of the first quarter of the 7th century, retained their barred handles, for example this kotyle of fig. 9³⁷.

Euboean Gulf ceramic production of the first half of the 7th century shows relationships with almost the same centres as in the LG period: Attic and Corinthian, as well as Cycladic and Boeotian. This account of some basic features of Euboean Gulf pottery ca. 700-ca. 650 BC, is a preliminary contribution to understanding the characteristics of regional production during these years. This knowledge can, among other things, help us to date architectural remains and other artifacts and eventually to reconstruct the sequence of events in the Euboean Gulf region. If we fail to acknowledge

contemporary material culture, we can easily believe that this half-century is represented by far fewer remains than actually exist and construct hypotheses concerning, for instance, settlement discontinuity at some Euboean sites. As said before, discontinuity is often reported for 7th-century Euboea, mostly due to the fact that changes in material culture have not been thoroughly traced. This is quite evident especially in the case of Subgeometric vases. Furthermore, vases with Orientalizing motifs, even if far fewer in number than the linear Subgeometric, show that ceramic production at Euboean Gulf sites like Eretria and Oropos could follow the stylistic trends set by Attic and Corinthian workshops to some extent. This reconsideration of the relationship between material evidence and societal developments ca. 700-ca. 650 BC will, it is hoped, serve to stimulate discussion of Euboean Gulf societies during this period, whose features are still dark and largely unexamined.

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36. Further bibliography: Stampolidis 2003, 353, no. 477. For skyphoi of this class that have also been dated later than the LG period, see Neeft 1981, 37, n. 124-125 and 127; Kourou 1983, 267-268; Gadolou 2008, 313-322.
37. A similar kotyle was found at Eretria: Descœudres 1968, 102, FK 119. 1, pl. 28, 2.

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Fig. 1. Map of the South Euboean Gulf and its sites (after A. Mazarakis Ainian).

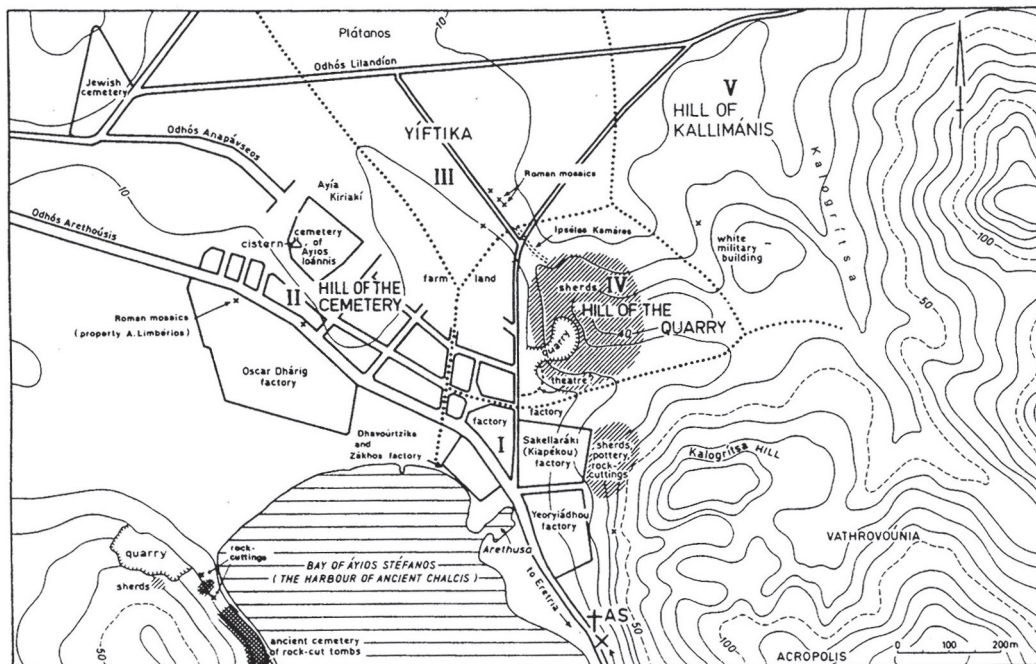


Fig. 2. Plan of Chalkis (Bakhuizen 1985, fig. 49).

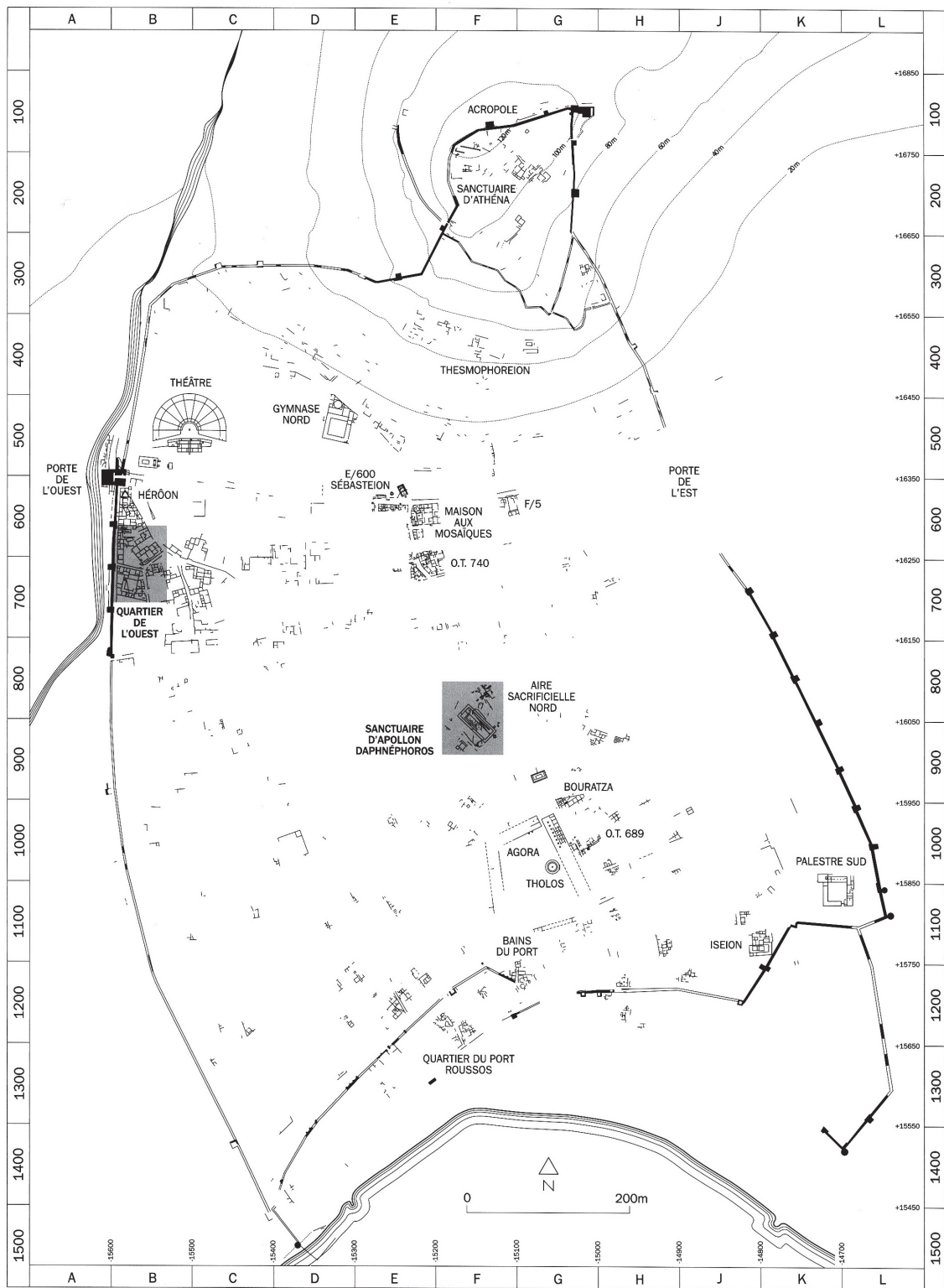


Fig. 3a. General plan of Eretria (Verdan, S. – Kenzelmann Pfyffer, A. – Léderrey, Cl., 2008. *La céramique géométrique d'Érétrie. Eretria: fouilles et recherches XX*, Lausanne, pl. 2).

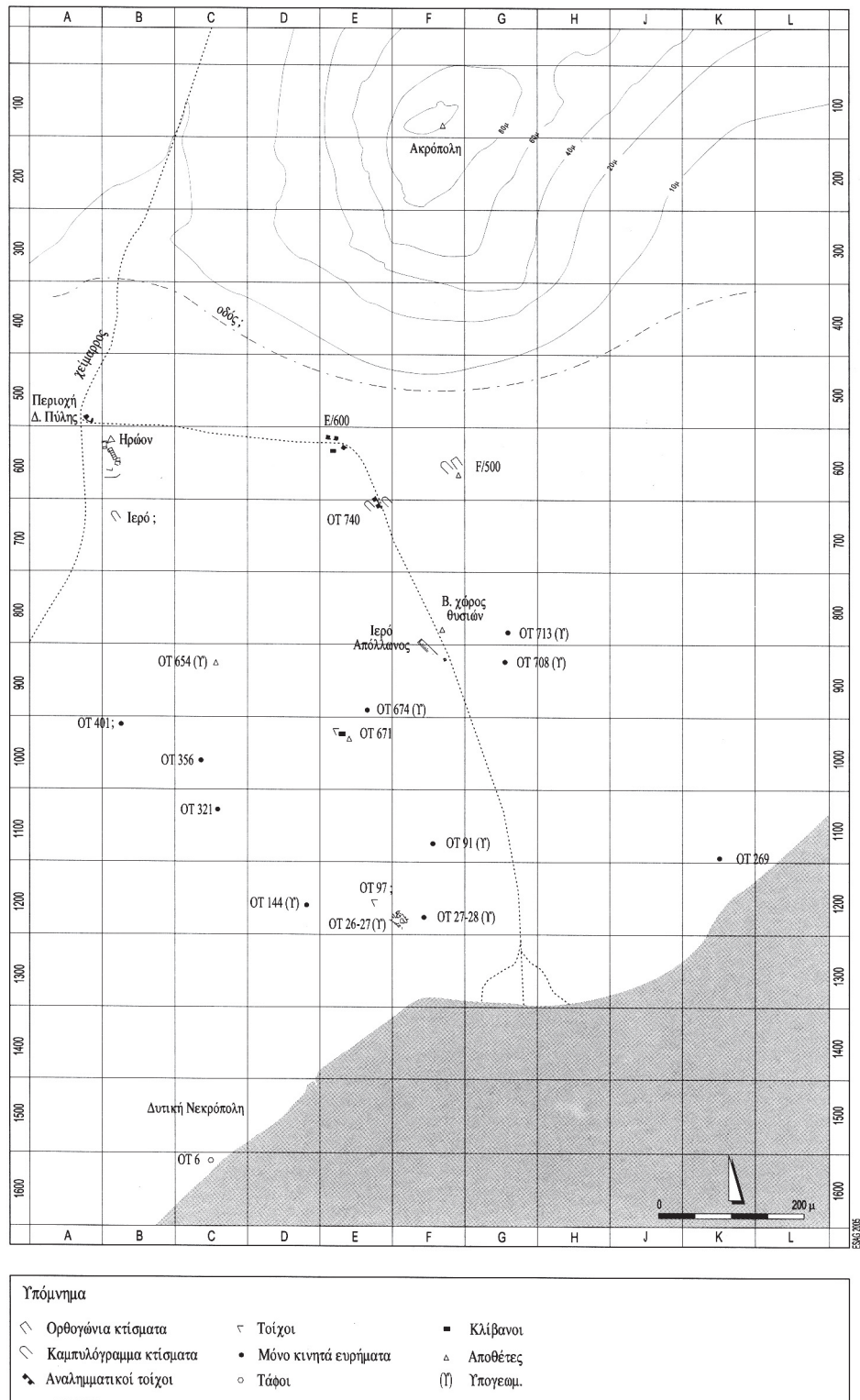


Fig. 3b. Eretria ca. 700 BC-ca. 600 BC (Charalambidou 2006, 1016, fig. 1).

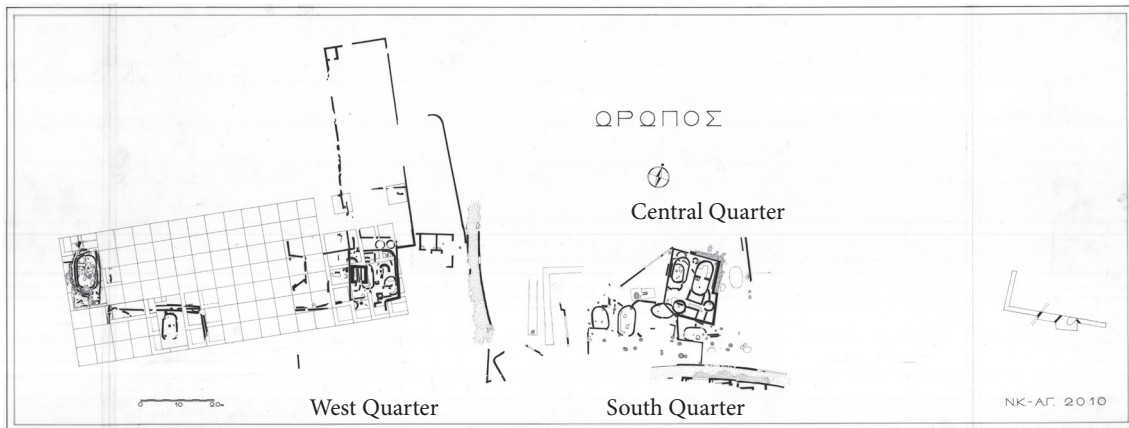


Fig. 4a. OSK plot at Oropos (Central, West and South Quarters; drawing by N. Kalliontzis and A. Gounaris).

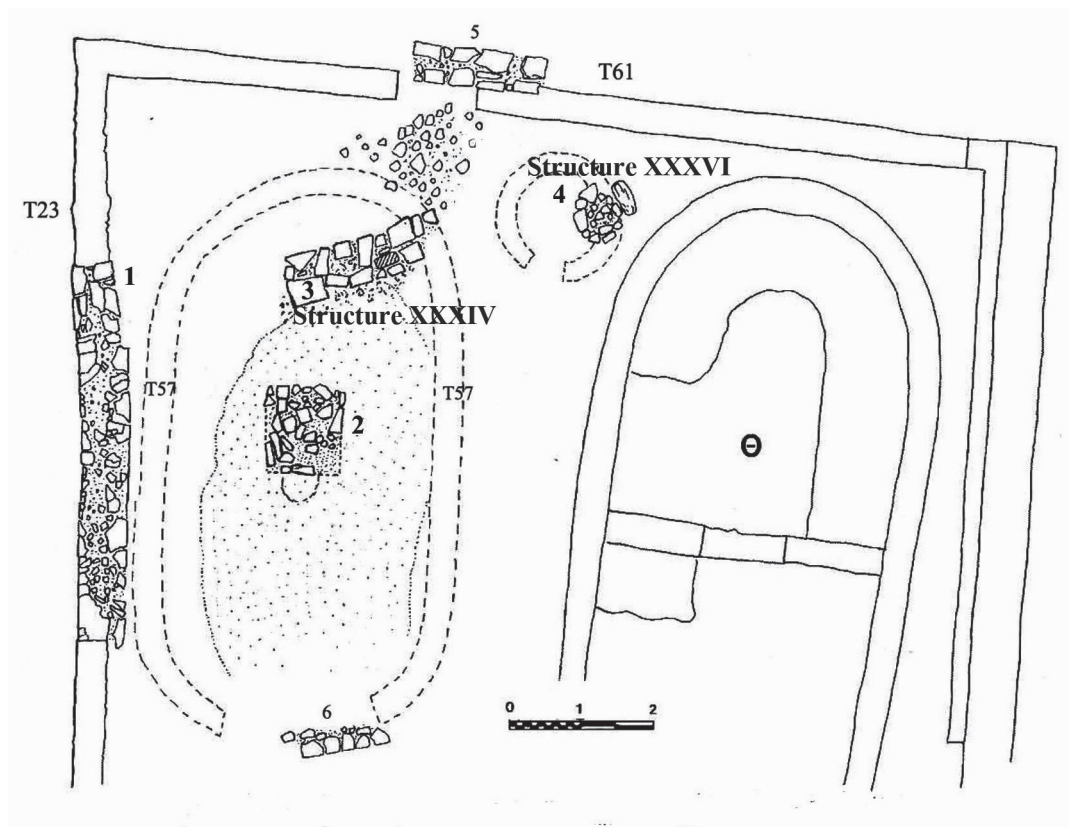


Fig. 4b. Plan of the stone structures in the area of the Central Quarter (Mazarakis 2002, fig. 8).

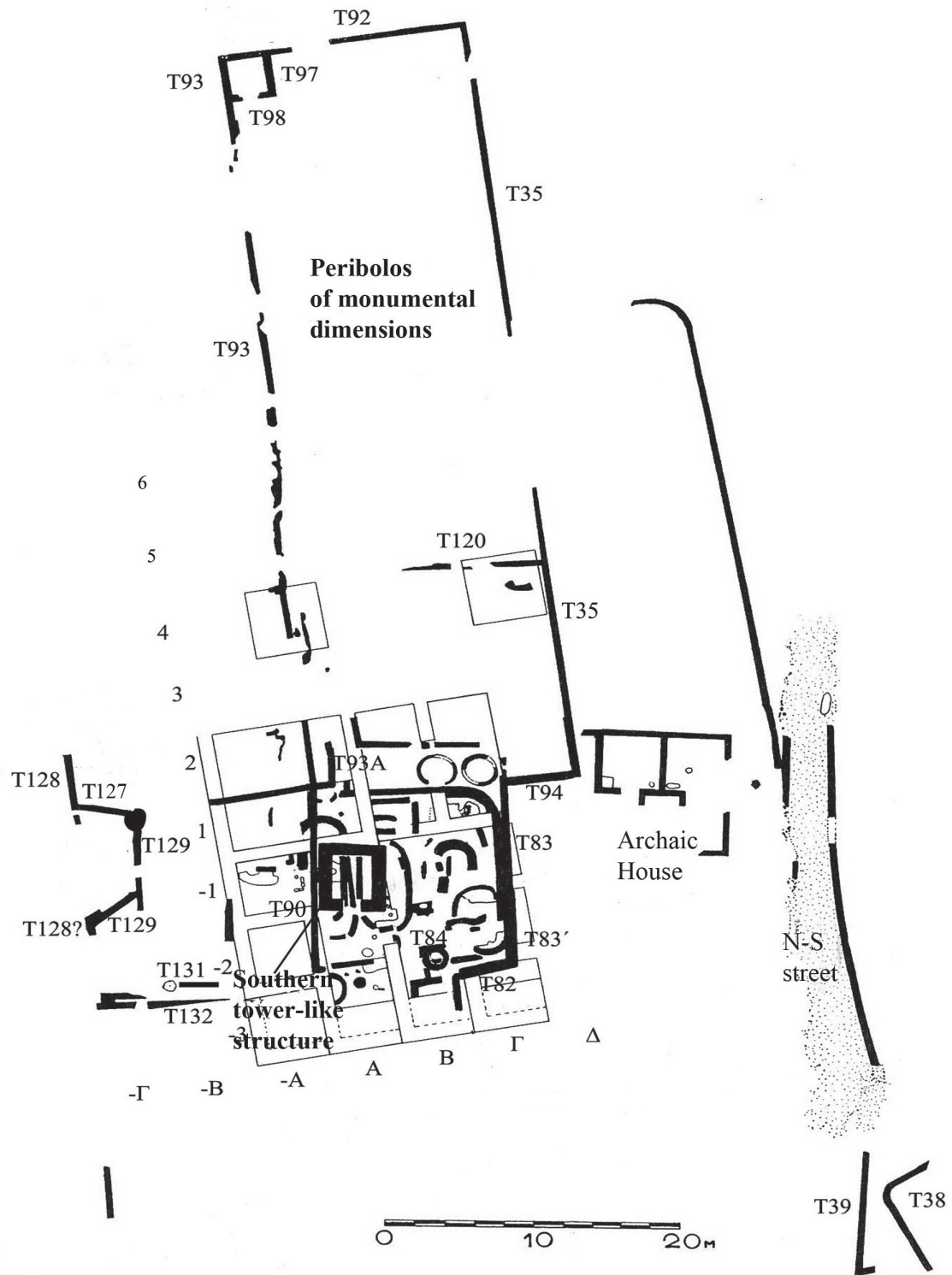


Fig. 4c. Plan of the peribolos in the West Quarter (drawing by N. Kalliontzis and A. Gounaris).



Fig. 5a. Pottery from the North Sacrificial Area at Eretria (Huber 2003, pl. 76).

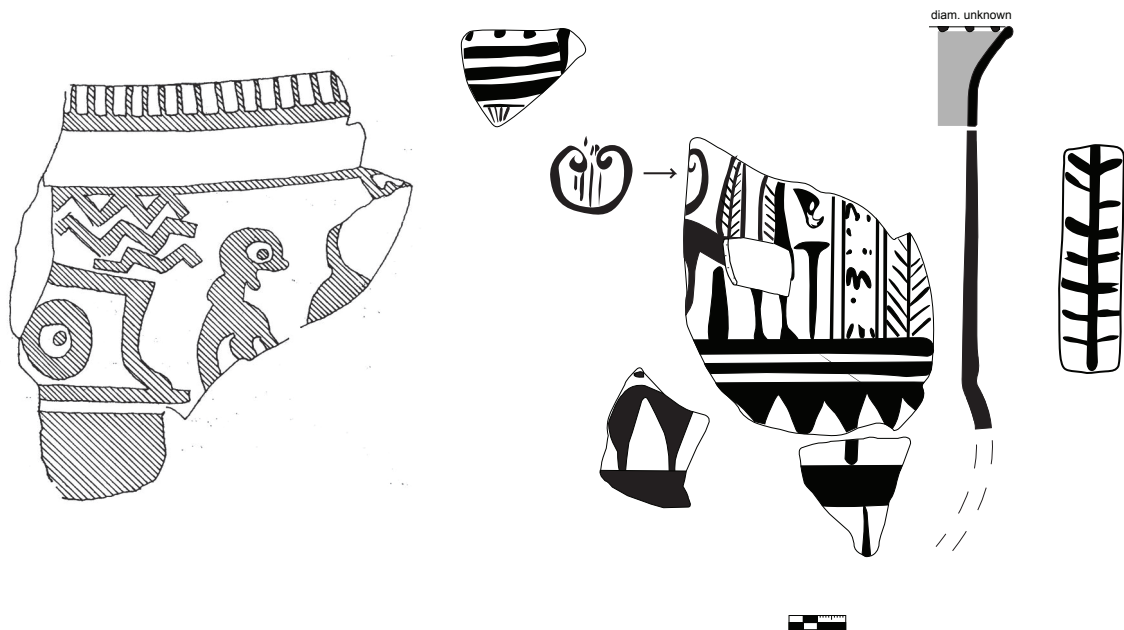


Fig. 5b. Krater from the area of the West Gate at Eretria (FK 475/488 without inv. no. Descœudres 1976, Abb. 13).

Fig. 6. Jug with tall neck from Oropos ($\Omega K/IIy1840$; OSK plot).



Fig. 7. Relief pithos with Centaurs scene found at Zarakes on Euboea (ME 18687; Chatzidimitriou 2003-2004, 181-196, pl. 37-38a).

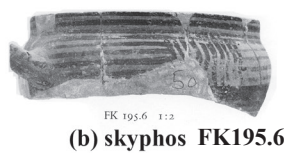
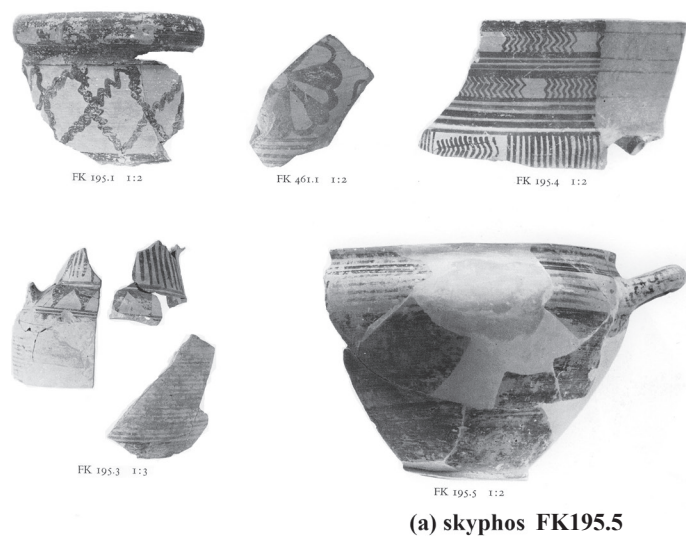


Fig. 8. Pottery from the area of the West Gate at Eretria (Descœudres 1976, pl. 5).

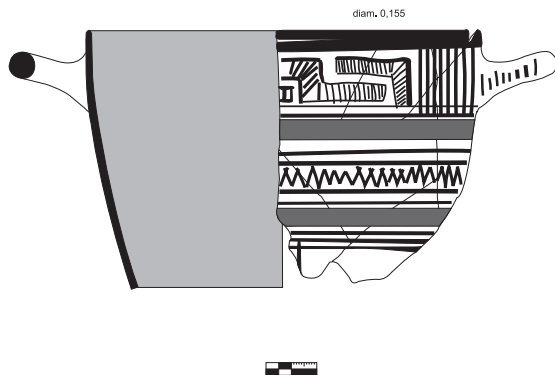


Fig. 9. Kotyle from Oropos ($\Omega K/IIy2722$; OSK plot).

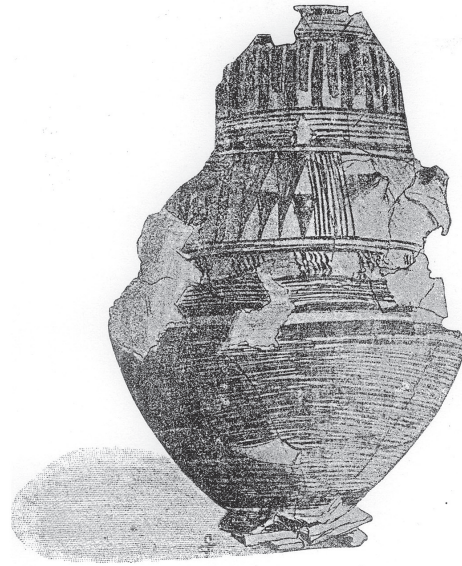


Fig. 10a. Grave amphora from the West Cemetery of Eretria (ME 19779; Boardman 1952, A4, fig. 21a, pl. 3B, 5; Blandin 2007, pl. 121, 7).

Fig. 10b. Grave amphora from the West Cemetery of Eretria (NM, without inv.no. Kourouniotis 1903, figs. 16-18).



a-b. NM12131a



c-d. NM1005

Fig. 10c. Grave amphorae from the West Cemetery of Eretria (photographs from the NM archive).



a-b. NM 12131



c-d. NM 12078

Fig. 10d. Grave amphorae from the West Cemetery of Eretria (photographs from the NM archive).

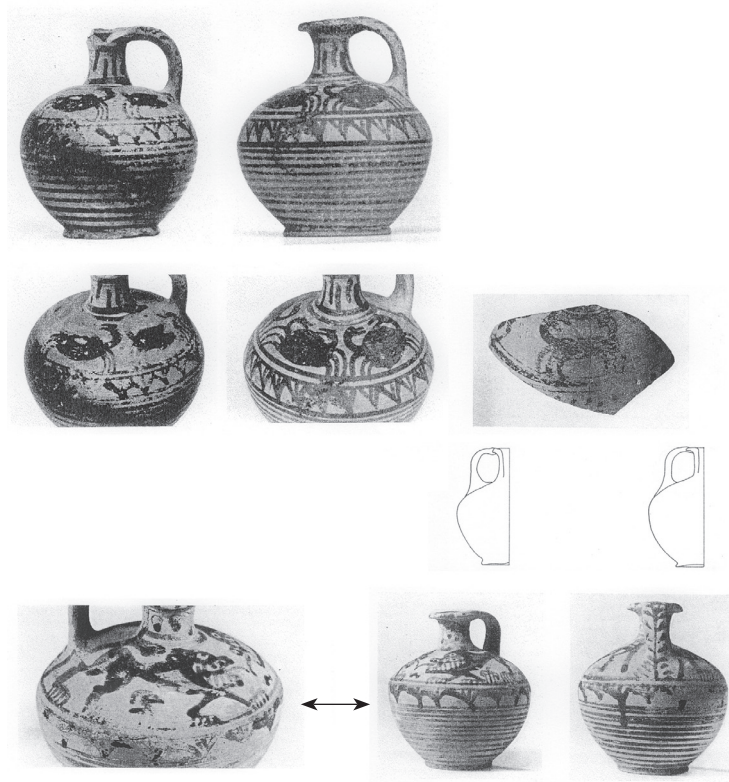


Fig. 11. The work of the Eretrian “Crab Painter” (Descœudres 1972, figs. 1-10).

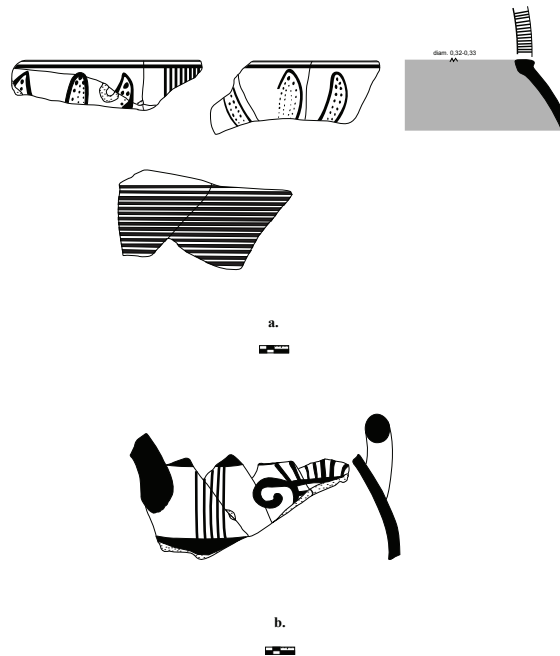


Fig. 12. Pottery from Oropos (a: ΩΚ/Πγ60, b: ΩΚ/Πγ2724; OSK plot).

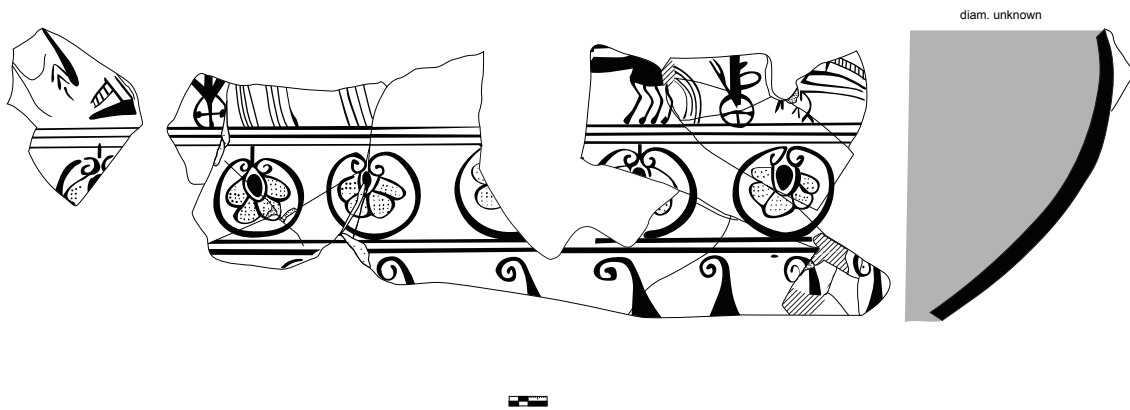


Fig. 13. Krater from Oropos (ΩΚ/Πγ1919; OSK plot).



Fig. 14. Jug with tall neck from Oropos (ΩΚ/Πγ869; OSK plot).

